

Message Text

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CONFIDENTIAL LISBON 3779

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL NATO PO
SUBJ: AD HOC GROUP ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL: NEXT STEPS

REF: USNATO 04938 (DTG 172105Z MAY 78)

1. TELLING IT LIKE IT IS: LACKLUSTER ALLIED PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE PORTUGUESE FORCE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM IS DISAPPOINTING, BUT NOT SURPRISING. THUS FAR, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF M-48A5 TANKS FINANCED BY THE FRG AND 105MM HOWITZERS GRANTED BY ITALY, THE UNITED STATES HAS BORNE THE BURDEN OF THE MODERNIZATION EFFORT. DESPITE THE GENUINE SYMPATHY WITHIN THE ALLIANCE FOR PORTUGAL'S NEEDS, WE RECOGNIZED FROM THE BEGINNING THAT THE PRIMARY CONTRIBUTIONS WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM THE UNITED STATES AND GERMANY. WE AGREE WITH USNATO THAT THE MARGINAL RETURNS COMING OUT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE THUS FAR HAVE BEEN A DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE GOP. BUT ABOLITION OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE WOULD BE AN EVEN GREATER DISAPPOINTMENT

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FOR PORTUGAL. IT WOULD BE READ HERE AS AN UNMISTAKABLE STATEMENT THAT THE ALLIANCE DOES NOT CARE. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT THE COMMITTEE SERVES A USEFUL SYMBOLIC FUNCTION.

2. AND ACCEPTING THE CONSEQUENCES: WE ALSO SHARE NATO'S JUDGEMENT THAT THE COMMON FUNDING APPROACH IS LIKELY TO BE

VIEWED WITH SKEPTICISM EVEN IF THE UNITED STATES IS
PREPARED TO PUSH HARD, WHICH WE PROBABLY ARE NOT. WE QUESTION
THE WISDOM OF PRESSING FOR AN EARLY READING ON THE COMMON FUNDING
IDEA OF A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE AD HOC COMMITTEE APPROACH.
WHY NOT LET MUMFORD CARRY THE BALL IF HE IS DETERMINED TO PRESS
THE ISSUE. A MORE IMPORTANT POINT, WE THINK IS THAT WE AND THE
FRG RECOGNIZE THAT WE MUST CONTINUE TO SHOULDER THE MAJOR
BURDEN OF THE PORTUGUESE MODERNIZATION EFFORT AND THAT IT IS IN
OUR INTEREST TO DO SO. THAT IS THE ISSE WE SHOULD BE ADDRESSING.
BLOOMFIELD

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